

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Currently amended) A ball catcher for selectively retaining drop balls in a tool string, the ball catcher comprising a substantially cylindrical body having a main bore running axially therethrough, at least a portion of the main bore being restrained to a first and a second bore running axially therethrough, the first and second bores being parallel and wherein the first bore includes restriction means at an end thereof, wherein the first and second bores are partially overlapping to provide a channel therebetween.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Original) A ball catcher as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the main bore is located centrally on the body.
4. (Original) A ball catcher as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the portion of the main bore includes an entry port, the entry port having a first aperture equal to the diameter of the first bore and a second aperture having a diameter less than the diameter of the first bore, the apertures being aligned with the first and second bores respectively.
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Cancelled)
7. (Cancelled)
8. (Cancelled)
9. (Original) A method of selectively retaining drop balls in a tool string, comprising the steps:
 - (a) inserting in a tool string a ball catcher including a first bore having retaining means and a second bore passing therethrough, the bores including an overlapping portion to provide a channel therebetween;

- (b) dropping a first ball of a first diameter through the tool string;
 - (c) directing the first ball into the first bore; and
 - (d) retaining the first ball in the first bore.
10. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the method further includes the steps of:
- (a) dropping a second ball of a second diameter, the second diameter being smaller than the first diameter through the tool string;
 - (b) directing the second ball into the first bore;
 - (c) passing the second ball through the channel into the second bore; and
 - (d) releasing the second ball from the ball catcher into the tool string.
11. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the method further includes the steps:
- (a) dropping a second ball of a second diameter, the second diameter being smaller than the first diameter through the tool string;
 - (b) passing the second ball through the second bore; and
 - (c) releasing the second ball from the ball catcher into the tool string.
12. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the method includes the step of passing a tool through the second bore into the tool string below the ball catcher.
13. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the method includes the step of actuating a tool above the ball catcher with the first ball.
14. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 10, wherein the method includes the step of actuating a tool below the ball catcher with the second ball.
15. (New) A ball catcher for selectively retaining drop balls in a tool string, the ball catcher comprising a substantially cylindrical body having a main bore running axially therethrough, at least a portion of the main bore being restrained to a first and a second bore running axially therethrough, the first and second bores being parallel and wherein the first bore includes restriction means at an end thereof, wherein the portion of the main bore includes

an entry port, the entry port having a first aperture equal to the diameter of the first bore and a second aperture having a diameter less than the diameter of the first bore, the apertures being aligned with the first and second bores respectively, and wherein the entry port is inclined with respect to the main bore.

16. (New) A ball catcher for selectively retaining drop balls in a tool string, the ball catcher comprising a substantially cylindrical body having a main bore running axially therethrough, at least a portion of the main bore being restrained to a first and a second bore running axially therethrough, the first and second bores being parallel, wherein the first bore includes restriction means at an end thereof, and wherein the portion of the main bore includes an entry port, the entry port having a first aperture equal to the diameter of the first bore and a second aperture having a diameter less than the diameter of the first bore, the apertures being aligned with the first and second bores respectively, and wherein the second aperture has a diameter substantially equal to a width of the channel.
17. (New) A ball catcher for selectively retaining drop balls in a tool string, the ball catcher comprising a substantially cylindrical body having a main bore running axially therethrough, at least a portion of the main bore being restrained to a first and a second bore running axially therethrough, the first and second bores being parallel and wherein the first bore includes restriction means at an end thereof, wherein said portion of the main bore is restrained by a third bore coaxially aligned with the first bore and having a diameter less than the diameter of the first bore.
18. (New) A ball catcher for selectively retaining drop balls in a tool string, the ball catcher comprising a substantially cylindrical body having a main bore running axially therethrough, at least a portion of the main bore being restrained to a first and a second bore running axially therethrough, the first and second bores being parallel and wherein the first bore includes restriction means at an end thereof, wherein the second bore is located centrally on the body.